(ii) Increase the productivity of natural pastures through improved management;

(iii) Growing of perennial fast growing grasses on bunds, channels and fields.

The Department of Agriculture has taken up a National Watershed Development Programme for rainfed agriculture during 1986-87 with an outlay of Rs. 239 crores as a special programme to stabilise and increase the crop yields in dryland areas. This scheme is in operation in 99 districts of 16 States falling in the rainfall range of 500-1125 m.m.

To meet the shortfall in food production due to drought in *kharif* season the targets of rabi production were fixed at 76.0 m. tonnes. To meet this target, suitable crop production technologies have been suggested for various regions.

This programme has been implemented by different States and the present indications are that the rabi harvests will be better than that of the previous year.

Development of three national capital Region Towns

418. SHRI SHANTI TYAGI: Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have plans to develop three towns, namely Panipat in Haryana, Alwar in Rajasthan and Meerut in Uttar Pradesh as priority towns, as a prelude to implementation of the National Capital Region Plan; and

(b) if so, what are the details of the plan and what is the stage of its implementation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI DALBIR SINGH): (a) The development of the three towns has been proposed as a part of the National Capital Region Draft Plan-2001.

(b) The NCR Planning Board had prepared a project having an estimated cost of Rs. 305.58 crores—Rs. 146.11 crores in the Central sector for railways, telecommunications and national highway and Rs. 159.47 crores in the State sector for urban development schemes including regional roads for the period 1987—90. The project will be executed subject to allocation of additional resources by the Planning Commission.

Inclusion of Tharoo Tribe in List of STs

419. SHRI SHARAD YADAV:

SHRI RAM NARESH KUSHAWAHA:

Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been persistent demand for over a decade for the inclusion of Tharoo tribe in Bihar in the list of Scheduled Tribes and that sometime in 1976 the Govt. of Bihar had requested the Central Government for the inclusion of the Tribe in the list of Scheduled Tribes; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons for delay in taking a decision in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (SHRIMATI SUMATI ORAON): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) All the proposals for amendment of the lists shall be considered by Government before bringing

a comprehensive proposal for amendment in the existing lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which can be done only through an Act of Parliament in view of Articles 341(2) and 342(2) of the Constitution.

Decline in the profits of SAIL

420. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1486 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 7th August, 1987 and state:

(a) whether accounts of the SAIL for the year 1986-87 have been finalised; if so, whether its profits during the 1986-87 have come down substantially;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps have been taken by Government to improve viability of the Steel plants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STEEL IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) Yes, Sir. SAIL earned a profit of Rs. 52.31 crores during the financial year 1986-87 as compared to Rs. 159 crores during 1985-86.

(b) The reduction in the profits during 1986-87 was mainly due to:—

(i) Increase in the prices of inputs particularly of coal, power, ferro-alloys and Railway freight.

(ii) Non-availability of adequate power.

(c) SAIL is making efforts to improve its profitability, *inter-alia*, by way of the following measures:—

(i) Increase total production and improve productivity;

(ii) Improve techno-economic parameters;

(iii) Reduce inventories and working capital;

(iv) Systematic improvement in maintenance of plant and equipment for better availability;

(v) Ensure adequate inputs and of the right quality;

(vi) Modernisation of the projects alongwith technological upgradation; and

(vii) Optimisation of captive power generation and energy conservation.

Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture

421. SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture has also decided upon co-operation in arid zone agriculture and dryland farming, besides water management and evaluation of ground water resources; and

(b) if so, the details of the agreement and the follow-up action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A statement giving details of the Joint Communique signed at the end of 5th Meeting of Indo-US Sub-Commission on Agriculture on 11th December, 1987 is enclosed. (*See* below). Concerned Departments/Organisations have been advised to